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# Charges for ex-instructor at notorious Lodi skydiving center linked to deaths

By **Katie Dowd, Andrew Chamings**

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The Skydive Lodi Parachute Center in Acampo, Calif.  
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A former instructor at the notorious Lodi skydiving center linked to at least 22 deaths since 1981 was arrested Tuesday in connection to serious allegations about his qualifications.

Robert Pooley, 46, allegedly continued to work at the Skydive Lodi Parachute Center despite having his rating as a "tandem examiner" suspended by the U.S. Parachute Association in 2015. This means Pooley should no longer have been able to give skydiving lessons, but prosecutors claim he didn't stop, going so far as to allegedly use the "digital image of the signature" of another certified colleague to sign off on his training sessions. Prosecutors say Pooley hid his suspension from co-workers and clients.

Pooley has been charged with four counts of wire fraud for charging for lessons he was not certified to give and two counts of aggravated identity theft. He could face up to 20 years in prison if convicted.

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FOX40 reports Pooley trained Yong Kwon, a 25-year-old instructor who died along with Tyler Turner, 18, in 2016. Turner had just graduated high school in Los Banos and was skydiving for the first time to celebrate a friend's birthday.

On the tandem jump with Kwon, the parachute did not open and the two hit the ground with a fatal impact. Deputies found the bodies in a vineyard just south of the center's landing zone. It was later revealed by the Sacramento Bee that Kwon reportedly did not have a proper license.

In March, Turner's family was awarded a \$40 million dollar judgment against the owner of the skydiving school, Bill Dause, a man who claims to be a skydiving legend with over 50 years of experience.

Dause told CBS Sacramento he didn't know Pooley was operating without proper certifications. Dause said instructors are primarily independent contractors who use his plane and airfield.

"I have problems with what has transpired," he said. "But at the time, everything was according to regulation to my knowledge."

In April, a Watsonville woman died during a jump from the Skydive Lodi Parachute Center, marking the facility's 22nd death since 1981. Nine of those deaths have occurred since 2016, according to the Federal Aviation Administration.

Sabrina Call, 57, perished when her primary parachute and her reserve chute tangled, according to the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office. She was reportedly an experienced skydiver with thousands of jumps to her name.

"Yes, we've had our share of fatalities and probably more than some of the smaller drop zones by a ways, but none of them have been the same. It's not the same problem," Dause said at the time.

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"We're sad, but it's just like a car wreck or anything else," he added. "You have to go on."

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**Katie Dowd**  
MANAGING EDITOR



Katie Dowd is the SFGATE managing editor.

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**Andrew Chamings**  
EDITOR-AT-LARGE



SFGATE's Editor-at-Large Andrew Chamings is a British writer in San Francisco. Andrew has written for The Atlantic, Vice, SF Weekly, the San Francisco Chronicle, McSweeney's, The Bold Italic, Drowned in Sound and many other places. Andrew was formerly a Creative Executive at Westbrook Studios. You can reach him at [andrew.chamings@sfgate.com](mailto:andrew.chamings@sfgate.com).

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